

# Church of Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction: In the book of Revelation the Apostle John was instructed to specifically write to seven churches in Asia. The words he records are from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The messages gleaned from the Lord's instructions to the churches are obviously intended for us all to learn. "*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

The first church addressed is located at Ephesus. Yet, our study will do us no good if we think the Lord is not addressing us. For the purpose of this sermon, I would like for us to believe we are members of the Lord's church in Ephesus. Therefore, what do we need to know from our Lord?

## I. Christ holds us in His hand (Rev. 2:1).

A. Our Lord is intimately involved with all of His churches. He walks in the midst of each congregation.

B. Each golden lamp stand represents a church.

1. We are dependent upon Him.
2. He has power to remove our light (our ability to represent Him).
3. He will punish our misconduct as a congregation (Rev. 2:5).

## II. Christ knows our works (Rev. 2:2).

A. Our "labors" as expressed in Greek means 'our troubles.'

B. We do not tolerate evil (2 John 7-11). In fact, the passage says we "*cannot bear those who are evil.*" We do not pretend to love the sinner as though his sins are inconsequential. People who commit sin are evil.

C. We have been tried by imposters that claim to be Christians.

1. We have **not** been deceived by the lies (Gal. 6:7-8). We can tell where their loyalties lie based on their words and deeds.

2. How many times have we seen false apostles mislead our friends into error (2 Cor. 11:13-15)?

## III. To our credit (Rev. 2:3).

A. We have persevered with patience.

B. We have worked hard applying the truth without growing weary (Gal. 6:9-10; Heb. 12:3-4, 11).

IV. Yet, Christ has a problem with us (Rev. 2:4).

A. How could we have left the Lord for which we are presently laboring? The Lord Himself has described us as a good, hard working, sin hating, and a patient church. How could the Lord say we don't love Him as we should?

B. Our congregation can only be what the individual members make of it. The Lord demands that we deny ourselves (Luke 9:23), our families (Luke 14:26) and our possessions (Luke 14:33).

C. We leave our first love when our members find other interests more important than the Lord. When we don't correct those misguided interests, it appears the congregation approves of those other interests. The next thing we find is more members pursuing their own interests (1 Cor. 5:6).

V. I don't believe we have left our first love.

A. However, we could if we put anything or anyone before our service to the Lord.

B. Putting unnecessary work, recreation, and family before the Lord will eventually result in a congregation losing its lampstand (Rev. 2:5).

VI. We hate sinful deeds (Rev. 2:6-7).

A. It has been suggested that the Nicolaitans lived as though sin should be tolerated. We don't except that notion!

B. We must recognize where we place our Lord in our lives. If we resolve to put Christ first we can live immortally "in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Conclusion: There is application to this congregation from the message given to the Ephesians. Complacency has always been a problem among brethren. We can't afford to let it overtake us. If we recognize that we have left our first love we need to repent before the Lord removes this congregation's lamp stand.